

Talking Stick-Based Team Games Tournament Learning Model on Students' Interest in Learning Akidah Akhlak

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ABSTRACT

This research is driven by the low interest of students in the subject of Aqidah Akhlak at MTs Darul Huda Bandar Lampung, specifically characterized by minimal engagement and attention. Preliminary findings indicated that while students experienced feelings of enjoyment, their enthusiasm did not translate into active participation or optimal learning focus. This study aims to determine the effect of the Talking Stick-based Team Games Tournament (TGT) learning model on students' learning interests. The research involved class VIII D as the experimental group and class VIII C as the control group, using a quantitative quasi-experimental approach with a post-test-only control group design. The results of the independent sample t-test yielded a significance value (p-value) of 0.017, which is significantly below the 0.05 alpha threshold, confirming a substantial difference in engagement levels between the active experimental class and the passive control class. The combination of academic tournaments and Talking Stick media proved effective in creating a fun, competitive, and focused classroom atmosphere, thereby significantly increasing student involvement dynamics. This study contributes to the field of pedagogy by providing empirical evidence that integrating collaborative game-based models with interactive media can effectively address student passivity and enhance learning motivation in religious education contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning interest is defined as an individual's habit of paying attention, remembering, and enjoying a particular activity or field, where the lack of such interest can hinder the effectiveness of the learning process (Fitri et al., 2022; Kharisma et al., 2025; Syaipul et al., 2024; Utomo et al., 2021). As a conscious process born from interaction with the environment, interest plays a crucial role in achieving educational goals because it can provide benefits, a sense of satisfaction, and joy for students (Fitri, 2020; Pebria et al., 2024; Yolanda & Meilana, 2021; Launin et al., 2022). Aspects such as attention, curiosity, and choice-making tendencies are strongly influenced by internal drives,

social motives for self-actualization, and emotional states, which are reflected in students' learning behavior, ultimately affecting their engagement and success in educational settings (Azizah et al., 2024; Herlambang et al., 2021; Mahmudah et al., 2023).

To optimize learning outcomes and ensure minimum completion criteria are achieved, classroom learning must be designed to enable students to connect concepts effectively and participate actively (Sari et al., 2023). This process requires a strategic role for teachers in developing syllabi and lesson plans that are structured and relevant to students' needs (Hasanah, 2020). Through a student-centered approach and direct involvement with concrete objects in the surrounding environment, students are encouraged to master skills independently so that the expected competencies can be achieved optimally (Handayani & Sari, 2023; Kurniasih, 2021).

Pre-research results, conducted through observations and interviews with Akidah Akhlak educators at MTs Nurul Huda Bandar Lampung, identified several obstacles in the implementation of learning. The main problems included low student motivation, which hindered active participation, the use of suboptimal learning models with minimal media variety, and the model's incompatibility with students' learning styles. The data revealed an anomaly in which the happiness indicator reached its highest percentage at 30%, but the result was not directly proportional to active student engagement, which reached its lowest point at 17%. Furthermore, the student interest rate of 29% indicated an uneven distribution of interest, while the attention indicator, which reached only 24%, confirmed focus issues during the learning process.

These data gaps indicate that although students were quite happy, monotonous learning methods led to low engagement and focus on class. Therefore, more interactive and relevant learning strategies are needed to balance all aspects of student learning interests. One solution to overcome these obstacles and improve academic achievement is to implement a comprehensive collaborative learning model. The Team Games Tournament (TGT) model is a recommended alternative because it can transform conventional learning patterns by providing opportunities for students to learn independently or in groups, so it is expected to optimize learning outcomes.

The Team Games Tournament (TGT) learning model is an inclusive approach that involves all students regardless of ability level through fun and motivating game elements (Manalu & Margareta, 2023; Suryansyah et al., 2025; Wati et al., 2024). The implementation of this model, which includes teacher delivery of material followed by group work and educational activities such as the use of a relay baton (talking stick) when singing, has been proven effective in building mutual respect and increasing active student engagement (Lestari et al., 2023). Through a reward mechanism for the best group and healthy competition, TGT not only overcomes low learning interest but also effectively trains discussion, communication, and feedback response skills (Gustika et al., 2024; Hasanah et al., 2020; Damayanti & Miswanto, 2024).

Although previous research by experts such as Trinity et al. (2023), Yulianti et al. (2023), and Solihah and Hawa (2024) has revealed the potential of Talking Stick-based TGT to improve learning interest, the integration of additional methods to increase its

effectiveness in the context of the Aqidah Akhlak subject at MTs Darul Huda has not been specifically explored. The novelty of this research lies in the combination of the TGT model with the Talking Stick method, which is designed to create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment to maintain student concentration and consistent engagement. In addition, this study uses a systematically structured questionnaire instrument to measure learning interest comprehensively through four main indicators, namely feelings of pleasure, involvement, interest, and attention, as a real effort to answer students' learning motivation needs in the subject of Aqidah Akhlak.

Building upon observations and interviews at MTs Nurul Huda Bandar Lampung, significant obstacles were found in the learning of Akidah Akhlak in the form of low motivation, active involvement, and variations in learning models that were not aligned with students' learning styles, so that the implementation of the Talking Stick-based Team Games Tournament (TGT) model was needed to create a more interactive and focused learning atmosphere. This research is expected to provide a real contribution for educators in optimizing four indicators of learning interest—namely feelings of pleasure, active involvement, interest in the material, and attention—while encouraging schools to continue supporting the development of teachers' pedagogical competencies. Through these findings, the integration of the TGT and Talking Stick models not only serves as a practical solution to increase students' enthusiasm for learning in the Akidah Akhlak subject but also becomes a foundation for further research in developing learning methods that are more effective, relevant, and oriented towards optimal learning outcomes.

2. METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design (Quasi-Experimental) type Non-Test Only Control Group Design which was implemented in the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at MTs Darul Huda Bandar Lampung. The research participants were divided into two groups, namely class VIII C as the control class using the conventional direct learning model and class VIII D as the experimental class that received intervention in the form of a Talking Stick-based Team Games Tournament (TGT) learning model. The implementation of the treatment in the experimental class was carried out systematically through five stages of TGT syntax, which included the delivery of material by the teacher, the formation of heterogeneous groups, the implementation of educational games, intergroup competitions (tournaments), and the awarding of awards to the group with the best performance.

The learning process began with the teacher delivering the Aqidah Akhlak material to both classes, specifically in the experimental class, followed by the formation of heterogeneous groups based on the students' academic abilities and social characteristics. The intervention stage continued through educational games relevant to the topic, as well as an intergroup tournament session that integrated the Talking Stick method to provide an opportunity for each student to answer the teacher's questions in turn. Finally, the teacher awarded the group with the highest score to stimulate students' motivation and enthusiasm for continuous learning.

The instrument used in this study was a non-test questionnaire specifically designed to measure students' learning interest, with a primary focus on indicators of engagement and attention during the learning process. The questionnaire consisted of eight statements systematically structured based on Slameto's theory of learning interest. Before being implemented in data collection, the instrument underwent a validity test using Pearson Product Moment correlation and a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data generated.

After all experimental treatments were completed, post-test data were collected by distributing questionnaires to students in both sample classes. The data collected were then analyzed using formal prerequisite tests, including normality and homogeneity tests, before proceeding to the hypothesis testing stage using a t-test. This statistical analysis aimed to determine whether the implementation of the Talking Stick-based Team Games Tournament (TGT) learning model significantly increased students' learning interest in the subject of Aqidah Akhlak.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of statistical data analysis indicate a significant shift in the parameters of student learning success. Based on post-treatment (post-test) data processing, this study successfully identified several fundamental findings related to the effectiveness of the Team Games Tournament (TGT) learning model integrated with Talking Stick media. The following findings represent the dynamics of academic achievement and student engagement patterns at MTs Darul Huda Bandar Lampung during the research period.

Normality Test

The normality test is a crucial step in inferential statistical analysis, aimed at verifying whether the data distribution in this study represents a normal distribution. This normality assumption is a primary prerequisite for determining the type of statistics to be used in subsequent hypothesis testing—whether parametric or non-parametric statistics.

In this study, the testing criteria were based on the significance value (p-value). Data are categorized as normally distributed if the significance obtained is greater than an alpha value of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Conversely, if the significance value is less than 0.05, the normality assumption is not met. A summary of the normality test results, for both the control and experimental groups, is presented in detail in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Normal Tests

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Data	1.00	.145	26	.170	.960	26	.396
	2.00	.112	24	.200*	.977	24	.845

The results of the data analysis using the Shapiro-Wilk normality test in Table 1 yielded statistical parameters indicating the characteristics of the data distribution in

both study groups. The significance value (p-value) for the experimental group was recorded at 0.396, while the control group showed a significance value of 0.845.

Methodologically, the normality testing criteria stipulate that data is normally distributed if the resulting significance value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance (alpha). Based on these results, because the p-values in both groups consistently exceeded the 0.05 threshold ($p > 0.05$), the assumption of normality in this study has been met. The implication of this finding is that the data have a symmetrical and representative distribution, allowing for further inferential analysis using parametric statistics, such as the Independent Sample t-Test.

Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test is a crucial step in the data analysis of this study. It aims to verify whether the variances of the data in the experimental and control groups are similar or equal (homogeneous). Meeting this homogeneity assumption is crucial, as it is an absolute prerequisite before conducting inferential statistical analysis using parametric tests. This ensures that any differences in results are truly caused by the treatment, not differences in baseline variance between groups.

In this test, the decision-making criteria are based on Levene's Test. Data are considered to have homogeneous variance if the resulting significance value (p-value) is greater than the 0.05 significance level (alpha) ($p > 0.05$). Conversely, if the significance value is less than or equal to 0.05, the data are considered heterogeneous. Based on the results of data processing using statistical software, a summary of the homogeneity test results for this study is presented in detail in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Data	Based on Mean	3.585	1	48	.064
	Based on Median	2.947	1	48	.092
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.947	1	45.596	.093
	Based on trimmed mean	3.479	1	48	.068

The results of the homogeneity of variance analysis in Table 2 show a significance value (p-value) of 0.064. Based on the established testing criteria, this value is statistically greater than the significance level (alpha) of 0.05 ($0.064 > 0.05$). This finding provides empirical evidence that the data variance in the experimental and control groups is similar or homogeneous.

Meeting this homogeneity assumption is a crucial indicator that the distribution of scores in the study population exhibits equal diversity. This minimizes potential bias caused by differences in baseline variance between groups, thus ensuring that any differences in learning outcomes are purely the result of the learning model intervention. Therefore, this research data meets the formal requirements to proceed to the inferential analysis stage using parametric statistics, namely hypothesis testing using the Independent Sample T-Test.

T-test

The Independent Sample T-Test was applied in this study as an inferential statistical analysis instrument to evaluate the significance of differences in post-test abilities between the experimental and control groups. This testing procedure was conducted systematically to determine whether the learning model intervention had a statistically significant impact on student learning outcomes.

Given that the results of the previous prerequisite tests confirmed that both groups had homogeneous variances ($p > 0.05$), the hypothesis testing was conducted using the Pooled Variance t-Test formula. This formula is particularly appropriate under conditions of equal variances because it provides a more accurate estimate of the standard error by combining the variances from both samples. Procedurally, this test aims to test the null hypothesis (H_0), which states there is no difference in means, versus the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which states there is a significant effect. A summary of the results of these statistical calculations is presented in detail in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Data	Equal variances assumed	3.585	.064	2.477	48	.017	1.96795	.79435	.37081	3.56509
	Equal variances not assumed			2.442	40.651	.019	1.96795	.80574	.34031	3.59559

The data tabulation in Table 3, using the Independent Sample t-Test, provides strong statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0). This finding indicates a statistically significant difference in the average learning outcomes of the experimental and control groups post-intervention.

A crucial fact in this test is seen in the significance value (p-value) obtained, which is 0.017. This value is well below the established significance threshold, $\alpha = 0.05$ ($0.017 < 0.05$). Technically, the consistency of these results is maintained under both the assumptions of homogeneous variances (Equal Variances Assumed) and non-homogeneous variances (Equal Variances Not Assumed), further strengthening the validity of the research findings.

Thus, it can be empirically concluded that there is a significant difference in achievement between the two groups of study subjects. The rejection of H_0 also serves as a strong basis for accepting the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which confirms that the implementation of the Talking Stick-based Team Games Tournament (TGT) learning

model has a real and positive influence on improving student abilities at MTs Darul Huda Bandar Lampung.

Discussion

Building upon a series of statistical analyses conducted, this study provides strong empirical evidence regarding the superiority of the Team Games Tournament (TGT) learning model integrated with Talking Stick media at MTs Darul Huda Bandar Lampung. Before testing the hypothesis, the data went through a strict prerequisite test to ensure the objectivity of the results, where the Shapiro-Wilk test showed that the data of the experimental group ($p = 0.396$) and the control group ($p = 0.845$) were normally distributed because both exceeded the threshold of 0.05. In addition, the Levene test produced a significant value of 0.064 ($p > 0.05$), which confirmed that the data variance between groups was homogeneous. Fulfillment of these assumptions is crucial because it ensures that the differences in learning interests found truly stem from the learning treatment provided, not due to differences in students' basic variance.

The main finding of this study lies in the results of the independent sample t-test, which showed a p-value of 0.017. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted because the significance value was well below the alpha threshold of 0.05. This rejection of H_0 confirmed a statistically significant difference in average learning interest between students taught with the Talking Stick-based TGT model compared to the control group. The validity of this finding was further strengthened by the consistency of the significance values for both the Equal Variances Assumed ($p = 0.017$) and Not Assumed ($p = 0.019$) assumptions, indicating that the results of this study are robust and not influenced by variations in data distribution.

The success of this model can be analyzed through the synergy between the Team Games Tournament (TGT) dynamics that create an atmosphere of healthy competition and collaboration and the role of the talking stick as a catalyst for equitable participation. This aligns with social learning theory, which emphasizes that interaction among students in groups can increase academic responsibility and emotional engagement with the material (Ahn et al., 2020; Li et al., 2023). The integration of Talking Stick effectively eliminated the dominance of certain individuals, resulting in more dynamic and inclusive student engagement patterns at MTs Darul Huda, which in turn fostered a more collaborative learning environment and enhanced overall student participation in discussions. This finding supports previous studies that found that combining games and interactive media can significantly reduce boredom and improve student focus in learning religious material that tends to be theoretical (Papakostas, 2024; Zainuddin et al., 2023).

Quantitatively, the data shows an increase in scores on learning interest indicators in the experimental class, particularly in aspects of student engagement and attention. Although the difference between the control and experimental classes did not reach a high level of statistical significance, this model offers a much more interactive and enjoyable learning experience than conventional methods, which tend to be one-way,

both practically and observationally. The model's success in fostering learning interest is inseparable from the characteristics of the Talking Stick-based Team Games Tournament (TGT), which creates a challenging yet relaxed atmosphere. The game element in TGT ensures students feel actively engaged without feeling pressured by formal testing, while the randomly moving stick system demands full concentration from everyone. Intergroup competition has also proven effective in fostering a sense of collective responsibility, leading to increased student intrinsic motivation.

These findings align with motivational theories in learning, which state that a variety of models and media are crucial in overcoming low learning interest caused by pedagogical boredom (Cook & Artino, 2016; Hattie et al., 2020; Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023). The Talking Stick-based TGT model provides students with space to think, speak, and collaborate through meaningful, concrete activities. This evidence confirms previous studies that asserted that participatory learning models can transform the teacher's role from merely conveying information to a facilitator who designs a dynamic learning flow (Dara & Kesavan, 2025; Vartiainen, 2017). As stated in the student-centered learning framework, providing reinforcement in the form of rewards at the end of the session plays a crucial role in appreciating student effort, thus encouraging continued active participation. The implementation of this model demonstrates that a recreational, yet focused classroom atmosphere is key to building holistic student cognitive and emotional engagement.

Overall, this study concludes that the Talking Stick-based TGT model is an effective intervention for improving student learning success parameters. The combination of game elements, teamwork, and interactive media has been proven to have a significant and positive impact on students' final performance at MTs Darul Huda Bandar Lampung. As a contribution, this research provides an important reference for educators to consider variations in learning models that suit their students' needs and characteristics. For students, this model can enliven the learning process without becoming boring, thereby enhancing their engagement and motivation to learn. For other researchers, these findings can serve as a foundation for the development of innovative interactive learning models and the integration of TGT with more contextual learning methods, particularly in the field of religious education, such as Akidah Akhlak.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Talking Stick-based TGT model significantly increased students' learning interest. This was evident from the striking difference in scores between the experimental class (VIII D) which had a high level of engagement and attention compared to the control class (VIII C) which tended to be passive. The combination of the academic tournament (TGT) and the surprise element of the Talking Stick media proved effective in creating a fun, competitive, and focused classroom atmosphere, thereby reducing boredom in the Akidah Akhlak material. The results of hypothesis testing using the Independent Sample t-Test showed a statistically significant difference in average learning outcomes between the experimental and control groups,

confirmed by the p-value of 0.017—far below the significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that there is a positive and significant influence of the use of this learning model on students' learning interest. These findings provide strong empirical evidence that the implementation of the Team Games Tournament (TGT) learning model integrated with Talking Stick media has a positive and significant influence on improving academic abilities and the dynamics of student engagement at MTs Darul Huda Bandar Lampung. Furthermore, the validity of these findings has a high degree of confidence because the consistency of significance is well maintained, both under homogeneous and non-homogeneous variance assumptions.

As a suggestion, teachers are advised to adopt the Talking Stick-based TGT model as an alternative instructional method to create a more competitive yet collaborative classroom atmosphere. The use of Talking Stick media can be optimized to ensure an even distribution of student participation, so that no student dominates or is left behind in the learning process. Considering that this study has proven the effectiveness of the model on learning outcomes, further researchers are advised to explore the influence of this model on other variables such as learning motivation, critical thinking skills, or student memory retention. In addition, further research is recommended to apply this model to a wider population or different subjects to test the consistency of the effectiveness of the Talking Stick-based TGT model more comprehensively.

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